



# DRIFTWORDS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BIG RIDEAU LAKE ASSOCIATION (BRLA)  
SERVING THE RIDEAU SINCE 1911 • POONAMALIE TO NARROWS LOCK  
– SPRING 2007 –

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Volunteer Needed!

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Evans and Dunlop Families

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**FROM THE BOARD ROOM:  
DOUG ARRAND, BRLA PRESIDENT  
PRESIDENT@BRLA.ON.CA**

The shutters are off, the water is on, the docks are in the water and the boats are calling. Good thing that BRLA's Shoal Marker's are in place! Summer's close at hand, and once again BRLA is gearing up for a

great season of activity on the lake.

We'll kick off our summer with our own Big Rideau Tradition – Fireworks from Cow Island.

This spectacular show put on by BRLA Member Mike Fraser takes place on the Saturday evening of the Canada Day Long Weekend: this year its Saturday June 30 at dusk.



*photo: Gord Harrington*

**BRLA needs your support for this unique event.** Fireworks are funded solely out of your donations and membership dues. So please, give generously to support this unique celebration of our lake, and our country. You'll find donation boxes at neighbourhood businesses, there will be boats with donation buckets out on the water the night of the event, and you can also support us by adding a bit extra to your membership renewal.

This issue of DriftWords contains full details of our activities this summer, including a coverage of **Environmental** issues, **Government and Marine Affairs**, and details of a rich recreational program that includes **Sailing Lessons** and **Swim Lessons** as well as Day Camp, the **Summer Social** and the **Regatta**.

BRLA is your association, and we need your help to keep on top of things. If you can assist in any of our areas of activity, please let us know. Email [brla@brla.on.ca](mailto:brla@brla.on.ca). Your Board looks forward to seeing you on the lake this summer and to another year of programs focused on building a strong community in a healthy environment on Big Rideau Lake.

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## FROM THE BOOKS OF THE TREASURER ED BRIGDEN, TREASURER@BRLA.ON.CA

At the Board meeting of April 25 the Executive approved the 2007 Budget estimates of \$40,600.00.

The following is a brief overview of the revenues and expenditures for the Summer months. As in the past the executive will be monitoring project revenues and expenditures prior to implementing the projects.

<b>Revenues</b>	
Memberships, Donations, Recreation	\$31,300.00
Rideau Lakes Environmental Foundation	\$8,500.00
Misc.	\$800.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$40,600.00</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Property, Administration, Communications.	\$15,900.00
Environmental, Shoal markers, Fireworks.	\$14,700.00
Office Rental.	\$4,800.00
Recreation	\$4,700.00
Misc.	\$500.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$40,600.00</b>

## NOTICE BIG RIDEAU LAKE ASSOCIATION (BRLA) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**JULY 7, 2007, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
PORTLAND TOWN HALL**

### AGENDA

1. Call To Order
2. Welcome & Introduction Of Guests
3. Minutes of AGM Held July 2006
4. President's Report - Doug Arrand (acting)
5. Treasurer's Report - Ed Brigden
  - A. Auditor's Report for year ended December 31, 2006
  - B. Motion to appoint auditor for year ending December 31, 2006
6. Membership Report
7. Rideau Lakes Environmental Foundation (RLEF) Report
  - A. President's comments
  - B. Treasurer's Report
8. Committee Reports
  - A. Communications: Website & DriftWords
  - B. Environment
  - C. Government Affairs & Marine Safety
  - D. Recreation/Cow Island
9. Elections
  - A. President for 2007/08
  - B. Directors for 2007/09
10. Presentations from Guests
11. Raffle Draw
12. Adjournment - BBQ lunch to follow

### RIDEAU LAKES ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION (RLEF)

The Rideau Lakes Environmental Foundation is a registered charity that supports environmental programs on and around Big Rideau Lake, including the work of the BRLA. RLEF receives donations (for which the donor receives a tax receipt), and use them to support environmental and lake safety programs. Over the past several years, your support for RLEF – in gifts typically ranging from \$50 to \$500 – has provided the BRLA with about \$8,000 per year to fund its programs on the lake.

Please give generously when you are asked to support the RLEF this year.

## ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

PAT CHAMBERLAIN, ENVIRONMENT@BRLA.ON.CA

### SEPTIC SYSTEMS RE-INSPECTION PROGRAM

The Township of Rideau Lakes has started a three year Septic Systems Re-Inspection Program and BRLA representatives were invited to meet with Jamie Saunders to learn more about it. Jim Mulder, Septic System Inspector for Rideau Lakes, has retired and Jamie, Inspector for the Tay and Mississippi Area, has been hired for this project. 100 shoreline properties will be inspected in the Township this year: about 25 of these will be on Big Rideau Lake. For more details see Jamie's article in this issue of DriftWords. It is to be hoped that all shoreline owners will be aware of their responsibility to avoid, at all costs, any pollution of the lake whether it is from faulty septic systems, runoff from fertilizer or pesticide use or careless handling of boat fuel and/or cleaning material.

### FISHING REGULATIONS

There has been a delay in obtaining approval for new Recreational Fishing Regulations. Anglers should continue to use the 2005-2006 Recreational Fishing Regulations throughout 2007. Note also that the province has **extended the bass season across the province** by moving the opening day from the last Saturday in June to the fourth Saturday in June.

Non-native trout will no longer be used in the **trout stocking program in Big Rideau Lake** as research has shown that this can have negative results for the native trout population. When the native trout that are still available for

stocking have been used all stocking will cease. Studies will continue to evaluate the trout fisheries on the lake.

### ZEBRA MUSSELS

When I made an early visit to my cottage this spring I was very surprised to see how clear the water was on the outer side of my dock: 15+ feet of water, and I was looking at details on the lake bottom that I had never seen before! This clarity is definitely the result of Zebra Mussel activity and, unfortunately, they are not going away. When the water warms up we can likely expect green algae to appear again. If you would like to learn more about these freshwater mollusks a good web site is: Google, then the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters Invasive Species, click on the Invasive Species Awareness Program and follow the links.

### HUMMINGBIRDS AND LOON WATCH

The **Ontario Hummbirding Project** can be found at [www.ontariohummingbirds.ca](http://www.ontariohummingbirds.ca) I hope you will take a minute to look at this web site and consider taking part in their survey. You will find good information and photos, range maps and a section on "Attracting and Feeding Hummingbirds".

A reminder to Loon Watchers, and an invitation to anyone interested in monitoring the loons in your area of the lake, to contact Canadian Lakes Loon Survey to register as a Loon Watcher and receive your report forms. Contact Kathy Jones, Aquatic Surveys Officer, E-mail: [aqsurvey@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:aqsurvey@bsc-eoc.org)



### COW ISLAND SHORELINE RESTORATION PROGRAM

We progress slowly! As you know last year the Environmental Committee and Cow Island Committee with help from EcoScapes developed a shoreline restoration program. It is our hope that not only will we stop the erosion on the Cow Island shoreline but that BRLA members and the general public will be able to visit the island to see for themselves what they can do to protect their own properties. We applied for the required permit from Parks Canada last August and expect to receive it soon. A grant for our work from the Rural Clean Water Program is a possibility but they require the Parks permit to be in hand before they visit to make their assessment. So ... we wait! The riprap work must be done at low water and we do hope to get that done in the fall.

Projects this summer will possibly include some work in preparation for future planting and some trail maintenance in areas back from the shoreline. We also hope to develop a display in the cabin that will show the "before and after" of our work and be helpful to anyone with shoreline problems.

For more background, see the EcoScapes Assessment on the BRLA web site at <http://www.brla.on.ca/environmental/CowIslandReport2006.pdf>

### RIDEAU LAKES WATERSHED PLAN

The development of the Rideau Lakes Watershed Plan began in 2005 when public meetings were held to hear the ideas and concerns of the lakes' communities within this watershed. The Public Advisory Committee, made up of interested landowners, lake association members, and business representatives have met regularly to continue discussions on goals and objectives for the Rideau Lakes area for the next 20 years.

Objectives include identifying existing and potential water pollution sources, managing water levels, promoting the importance of maintaining a sturdy, treed buffer around all lakes and along all streams, ensuring development does not negatively impact the health of lakes and streams and identifying ways in which the general public can help achieve a healthy environment. The plan will also address how government agencies and the general public can work together to achieve these objectives and how the economy and the environment are linked.

Next stage in the process includes the need to inform people in the area about the progress of the plan and to develop the partnerships that are needed to get the job done once the report is completed. It is expected that the report will be completed in early 2008.

If you have comments or concerns please contact Pat Chamberlain, [environment@brla.on.ca](mailto:environment@brla.on.ca) or Lynn Preston at the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority at 1-800-267-3504 ext 1171 or at [lynn.preston@rideauvalley.on.ca](mailto:lynn.preston@rideauvalley.on.ca)

## “SUMMER SOUNDS”

AN ANNUAL FUNDRAISER FOR COW ISLAND

SATURDAY JULY 14<sup>TH</sup> 2007

2:00 PM ON COW ISLAND

(rain date Sun. July 15<sup>th</sup> 2:00 P.M.)



Join us for an afternoon of music and fun on Big Rideau Lake. Listen to music, catch up with old friends and make some new ones. Summer Sounds is a pleasant social event for BRLA members and friends.

Mark the date on your Summer Calendar. The afternoon, including refreshments, is only \$25.00 per couple or \$15.00 per individual. Proceeds will be earmarked for Cow Island improvements.

**Reserve your tickets now, by sending a cheque to BRLA** (PO Box 93, Portland, ON K0G 1V0). Early response helps the Committee plan. Buy tickets now for your guests, and invite them later. Tickets will also be available at the BRLA Annual General Meeting, July 7, 2007, in Portland.

**SEE YOU ON JULY 14TH!**

*Transportation from Portland to Cow Island will be available if needed. Email [brla@brla.on.ca](mailto:brla@brla.on.ca)*

### SEPTIC RE-INSPECTION ON BIG RIDEAU LAKE. UPDATE FROM JAMIE SAUNDERS

#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A SEPTIC RE-INSPECTION PROGRAM?

The purpose of a septic re-inspection program is to collect information on existing septic systems on Big Rideau Lake. The program also looks to identify operation and maintenance concerns with these systems and inform property owners about the PROPER solutions to these problems. A major component of any septic re-inspection program is homeowner education. It is very important to know how water and wastewater is supplied and disposed of in your cottage. Please keep your eyes peeled for seminars offered in your area by the Mississippi Rideau Septic System Office (MRSSO). The consequences of improperly disposing of sewage can have huge impacts from an ENVIRONMENTAL and PUBLIC HEALTH perspective.

#### HOW ARE PROPERTIES SELECTED FOR THE RE-INSPECTION PROGRAM?

Properties are selected using water quality data, cottage age, development information and thorough consultation with concerned third party organizations. If your property has been selected for a re-inspection you will receive a package requesting you provide the MRSSO with some information on your septic system. By returning the questionnaire you have provided consent for your property to be inspected. Please be aware that ANY information you may have is of use to the Mississippi Rideau Septic Office.

#### WHAT IS INVOLVED IN A SEPTIC RE-INSPECTION?

A septic re-inspection consists of the excavation of septic tank lids, measuring the sludge/scum depth in the tank, assessing the tank condition, logging the locations of system components, measuring clearance distances and checking for visual indicators of septic system trouble in the area of the tile bed. Other types of systems will also be identified and their information recorded. Holding tanks, grey-water systems and privies will also be inspected and commented on and all are definitely considered in the re-inspection program.

#### WHAT CAN WE DO IF WE SUSPECT A PROBLEM WITH OUR SEPTIC SYSTEM?

If you suspect a problem with your septic system the appropriate course of action is to have the system inspected. You can do this yourself or hire a qualified septic system installer or inspector. This inspection should identify the root cause of the problem and help a qualified person identify possible solutions. If you decide to hire somebody to make a repair or alteration to your system make sure they provide you with a valid BCIN number. It is very important to note that any alteration or repair to a septic system requires a permit and to be inspected by the Tay Valley Septic Office. Patchwork solutions to septic problems can often increase the rate at which pollution reaches the lake. Oftentimes it is not just a question of making a system function hydraulically but ENSURING that it is functioning ENVIRONMENTALLY. If you need advice on any on-site wastewater issues, do not hesitate to use the Tay Valley Septic Office as a resource, they are here to help, not just point fingers at malfunctioning systems. They can also direct you to funding sources to assist with septic upgrades.

#### WHAT CAN WE DO IF WE SEE A SEPTIC SYSTEM EMITTING SEWAGE DIRECTLY TO THE SURFACE OR TO THE LAKE?

Call the Rideau Lakes Township Office immediately and report your concern to the building inspector. Sewage on the ground surface or heading directly to the lake is a serious and immediate public health risk. All complaints are kept anonymous and will be handled in a discreet and professional manner. The lake is something for everybody to enjoy. NOBODY should be allowed to put other cottagers at risk of illness OR impact the lake environment which ultimately impacts all the properties around the lake.

For more information contact Jamie Saunders, Mississippi Rideau Septic Re-inspection program co-ordinator at 613-913-7570, 613-259-2421 x.254 or [jsaunders@mvc.on.ca](mailto:jsaunders@mvc.on.ca).



## GOVERNMENT AND MARINE AFFAIRS

**HENRY COPESTAKE**  
**GOVTAFFAIRS@BRLA.ON.CA**

Taxation is a major issue for BRLA Members. BRLA is a Member of WRAFT (Waterfront Ratepayers after Fair Taxation). They send us this bulletin.



### WE NEED A 5% ANNUAL CAP ON PROPERTY TAXES: CAPTR\* 5% CAPPING RATIONALE

- CAPTR strongly supports 5% as a cap or smoothing mechanism. 5% approximates the **long term average** increase in residential property values in Ontario.
- the 4 year phase-in introduced by the Liberals to mollify our movement for tax reform is **just tinkering** and merely giving many of us a gradual notice of eviction! - it neither deals with the **volatility** of the assessments nor with the basic **unfairness** of the assessment process. The PC Party has adopted a **cap of 5%** in their platform; the NDP has proposed a **freeze** position until a property is sold.
- in the last reassessment, 61% of all residential Ont. properties increased by more than 6.5% per year, and over 400,000 properties have increased by more than 13% per year – volatility caused by the system, not our actions!
- through all party consent in Nov. 2006 the **Nova Scotia** Legislature has capped assessment increases from 2008 onwards **at the rate of inflation** - so there is a Canadian precedent.
- the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) in an Oct 2006 report showed that Ontario collects more in property tax (as a % of GDP) **than any country in the OECD**. - so fairness becomes a huge issue.
- **15 states in the US** have capped assessments and none have subsequently removed it - so it works. Maryland is the only US jurisdiction that uses a phase in approach similar to the Liberal policy, and it **also imposes a cap** – so why has the Ontario Government short-changed us?
- the Ontario **Ombudsman** said in the appendix of his report that he experienced a “tidal wave of concerns” including the volatility and unpredictability of assessments, the shift in tax burden to “hot” property markets that trapped seniors and people on fixed incomes and the resulting tax on substantial unrealized capital gains. - so the concern is widespread.
- When the **current 3 year assessment freeze** comes off in 2008, if the Liberals survive the Oct 10, 2007 election, they will have to deal with some very upset and hurting people if nothing further is done before then.
- an assessment cap is **revenue neutral** to both the municipalities and the province. It does not cap taxes - only the volatility of their distribution amongst property owners.

Write or email your MPP **TODAY** – see [www.captr.org](http://www.captr.org) for how to do it!

*\*CAPTR is the Coalition After property Tax Reform comprised of Associations representing over one million Ontario property owners.*

### WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

Here are some concerns from the BRLA Membership Renewal Forms.

**HIGH TAXATION -- ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION -- WETLANDS -- WATER TESTING -- CAMPGROUND EXPANSIONS -- SHORELINE WORKS -- SERVICES FROM THE TOWNSHIP -- PRESSURES FROM DEVELOPMENT -- BOAT NOISE -- BOAT SPEED -- WHICH ENGINE SHOULD I BUY? -- WHAT'S THAT GREEN STUFF?**

## SAFE BOATING

**CONSTABLE PAIGE WHITING  
COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICER / LANARK COUNTY O.P.P**

Spring is upon us and with it boaters will be taking to the waterways. It is important for all boaters to remember to incorporate safe boating tips to ensure that each and every trip is a safe and pleasurable one.



**Ensure You Have Necessary Equipment On Board:** The Small Vessel Regulations identify the minimum equipment required on board your pleasure craft according to vessel length. Failing to have the proper equipment not only jeopardizes your safety but also can result in monetary fines. Having a personal flotation device or life jacket for everyone on board is mandatory but remember to actually wear it. If you are involved in a serious boating incident you are 5 times less likely to drown if you are wearing a flotation device.



**Don't Cruise With Booze:** Fatigue, sun, wind, and the motion of the boat can dull your senses. Alcohol intensifies these effects and can leave your judgment impaired. It is illegal to drink and drive whether on land or water and a first offence can result in a heavy fine including the loss of your driver's license. Avoid the consumption of alcohol while on the water whether behind the wheel or not. By doing so, you will increase your safety and that of others.



**Be Courteous:** Recreational boaters must be prepared to share the waterways with wildlife, swimmers, divers and other boaters. Learn the right-of-way rules, and be considerate by operating at a safe speed. Consider the effect your boat's wake might create when choosing your speed. Ontario has adopted province-wide restrictions limiting shoreline speed restrictions to 10 km/h within 30 meters from shore on all waters. The few exceptions to the shoreline speed restrictions can be found in the Safe Boating Guide. In addition drive safely. A fine of over \$250.00 can be incurred for operating a vessel in a careless manner. Think of others and ensure everyone has an enjoyable time.



**Call 911 In Case Of An Emergency:** Whether a full time resident, or a cottager know your 911 addresses, the townships you reside in, and which fire or police agency services you. Keep this information in a handy location along with the administrative telephone numbers for police, fire or ambulance should you need to make a non-emergency telephone call. When on the water familiarize yourself with the names of any islands, inlets or bays you are traveling near. Knowing your location will assist emergency workers in locating you faster should you require assistance.

**Remember...9-1-1 should only be utilized in case of an emergency.**

For more information on necessary equipment, rules of the waterway or to obtain a copy of the Safe Boating Guide visit [www.boatingsafety.gc.ca](http://www.boatingsafety.gc.ca)

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## HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS WANTED

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As BRLA begins preparations for our 100th anniversary in 2011, we're gathering digital copies of historic photographs of the lake and its landmarks. If you have photographs that you can share – with the BRLA and the Heritage Tent for the International Plowing Match – please email [brla@brla.on.ca](mailto:brla@brla.on.ca)



## COW ISLAND REPORT DOUG ARRAND RECREATION@BRLA.ON.CA

We are moving ahead with Cow Island work. An application has been forwarded to Rideau Canal for a permit to do shoreline preservation work which we hope will reduce the erosion from wind and wave action. It will also act as a demonstration of what all waterfront owners can do to protect their shoreline as much as possible. John Simzer of the Rideau Canal is the approving officer and John has been to the island to determine what will be the most effective treatment.

When John arrived at Cow Island last August to visit the site, he noticed that we had new docks. The docks had been purchased to replace the previously existing docks that had disappeared over the winter of 2005/06. In spite of reporting the disappearance to the police as soon as it was discovered and publicizing the loss to everyone we knew on the lake, they never returned. We were forced to purchase new docks. John pointed out to us that BRLA was in con-

travention of the law because we had failed to apply for a permit to replace the former docks. We pointed out that we were ignorant of that aspect of the law that requires a landowner who wishes to replace existing docks or repair existing docks to apply for a permit. We also pointed out that in the process of obtaining quotes from various suppliers, not one of them asked if we had obtained a permit.

Subsequently BRLA has been charged and fined \$130.00 for the infraction. Let this be a warning to all members that Rideau Canal

Authorities are very serious about enforcing the law.

It is our intention to continue to find the funds to have a new septic tank and bed installed on the island as our current facilities are nearing the end of their useful life. We will also continue to do maintenance work on the cottage that we commenced last year with the assistance of a number of parent volunteers led by Don Harris and to whom we are most grateful.

We hope to see every member drop in to the island at least once this coming season.



*photo: Gord Harrington*

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## BRLA OFFERING SAILING LESSONS: AUGUST 7-10, 2007

Once again this summer the BRLA will be hosting the Ontario Sailing Association BOOM Program, and offering sailing lessons from Cow Island. Certified instructors will teach Canadian Yachting Association White Sail level 1, 2 and 3 standards. To keep costs reasonable –and so sailors can learn on the boats they will sail in the future – we have opted to provide our own boats this year. If your sailor can bring a boat with them, please let us know! Registration is limited to 16 children: \$240 per student for 4 days of instruction (9:00 am - 4:00 pm, on Cow Island). To register, please return the attached Sailing Camp Registration Form.

**ADULT SAILING LESSONS** With a minimum of 4 participants, we can also offer 3 evenings of adult instruction. So if you have always wanted to learn to sail, or want to rebuild your confidence and get on the water, now's your chance! Adult Classes are limited to 8 participants: (\$150, Tuesday - Thursday evening, 6:00 - 9:00 pm on Cow Island). To register, please return the attached Sailing



SAVE THESE DATES IN 2007

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	DETAILS
Saturday June 30	at dusk	BRLA Cow Island Canada Day Fireworks	Off Cow Island	Donations Appreciated!
Sunday July 1		Fireworks Cleanup	Cow Island	Email brla@brla.on.ca to volunteer
Monday July 3	9:00 am - 12:30 pm	BRLA Day Camp Starts	Cow Island	Register in Advance; See Forms Attached
Saturday July 7	10:00 am	BRLA Annual General Meeting	Portland Town Hall	Register in Advance; See Forms Attached
Saturday July 14	2:00 pm	Summer Sounds BRLA Cow Island Fundraiser	Cow Island	Tickets \$25 per couple, \$15 single from BRLA
Monday July 16 - Friday July 20 and Monday July 23 - Friday July 27	1:30 pm - 4:30 pm	Swim Lessons For Kids	Cow Island	Register in Advance; See Forms Attached
Saturday August 4	10:00 am - 1:30 pm	BRLA Annual Regatta	Cow Island	BBQ Lunch to Follow
Tuesday August 7 - Friday August 10	9:00 am - 4:00 pm	Sailing Camp for Kids	Cow Island	Register in Advance; See Forms Attached
Tuesday August 7 - Thursday August 9	6:00 pm - 9:00 pm	Sailing Camp for Adults	Cow Island	Register in Advance; See Forms Attached
Monday August 13 - Friday August 17 and Monday August 20 - Friday August 24	1:30 pm - 4:30 pm	Swim Lessons For Kids	Cow Island	Register in Advance; See Forms Attached
Saturday August 25		BRLA Volunteer / RLEF Donor Thank You Party		By Invitation

SWIM LESSONS ON COW ISLAND: TWO SESSIONS

Lindsay Cameron will be offering 2 two-week sessions of swim lessons this summer. Lessons will run Monday - Friday, 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm, on Cow Island. Registration fees start at \$100 per child (with discounts for multiple children. To register, please return the enclosed Swimming Lesson Registration Form.

Session 1	July 16-20 July 23-27
Session 2	August 13-17 August 20-24

# BRLA CORPORATE MEMBERS SPRING 2007

*Support our corporate members, and  
tell them you saw their ad in DriftWords!*



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